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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a training program for communication consultants in a school district, and presents an evaluation of the effects of the program on participants. A 2-week laboratory provided an opportunity for the 23 trainees to practice diagnosing and intervening into team organizational processes and to try out exercises and techniques that would prove helpful in working with district groups. Training continued after the laboratory, with consultants attending the interventions carried out by the participants and providing feedback on performance. Three main evaluation results are analyzed in this paper: (1) the influence of participant characteristics on laboratory participation, learning during training, and effectiveness in the consultant role; (2) the relationships among laboratory participation, learning during training, and external criterion measures; and (3) the effect of organizational factors on laboratory participation, learning during training, and effectiveness in the consultant role. (Author/MLF)

Preparing Communication Consultants for a School District: a Study of Some Effects of Laboratory Training[1]

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The purpose of this paper is to describe a training program for communication consultants in a school district, and to present an evaluation of the effects of the training program on its participants. The program is part of an organizational development (OD) project, "Self-renewal in a School District," being carried out by the Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration (CASEA) at the University of Oregon. What I would like to do is describe the need for new administrative structures in contemporary schools, describe the theoretical background for the project of which the training program is a component, talk about the training program itself, look at the way the program was evaluated, present some results, and then make some general remarks about what we have learned from the program.

The Need for New Administrative Structures

The ability of organizations to adapt to internal and external demands and changes has become crucial in current times of rapid social and technological change, social disorganization, and open confrontation among various sectors of community and society. The school organization faces a special set of critical problems in responding to divergent needs and demands from individuals and groups such as students, teachers, administrators and parents; from groups with special needs such as minority groups and the poor; and, from community political groups attempting to exert influence on school policy. It is becoming apparent that traditional ways of responding to these problems are more often than not ill-suited to their solution, and that the school organization needs to explore new ways of confronting and dealing with the variety of needs

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and demands generated by the sectors it intends to serve. The program described represents one kind of new administrative structure, designed to facilitate adaptive responses by the school to the variety of organizational problems it faces.

Communication Consultants in a School District. The new administrative structure appears in the form of a training program and a new role for a team of internal organizational consultants called "communication consultants" in a school district in Kent, Washington. This team was trained to sense and diagnose district organizational problems, intervene into organizational processes, and assess the effects of interventions made. The work of the team attempts to facilitate working relationships within and between organizational groups by teaching communication and problem-solving skills and instituting new procedures to reach desired goals. Often the work of the team turns the influence structure upside down when organizational groups are given the responsibility to make decisions that affect them, altering present operating procedures in the process. Taking responsibility for decision-making by organizational groups in goal or procedure setting increases committment to the organization and increases member feelings of satisfaction.

The activities of the consultant team were preceded by one year of OD work by CASEA in the Kent district. It was intended that the internal consultant team would continue OD activities in the absence of the outside CASEA trainers.

Theoretical Background

The project of which the program is a component, is theoretically guided by general systems theory (Buckley, 1967) and group dynamics theory (Bradford, Gibb, and Benne, 1964; Schein and Bennis, 1965) and views schools as open, goal-directed, adapting systems in which internal operations are stabilized by the existence of roles and normative expectations. In addition to serving a stabilizing function, roles and norms also provide a focal point for the

initiation of organizational change. Role-takers can be given the opportunity to try out new ways of performing operations, and receive social support for doing so from role reciprocators. When the purpose of change is more effective operation through adequate use of human resources and greater adaptibility, group dynamics theory and general systems theory receive their application (Schmuck, Runkel, and Langmeyer, 1969).

The consultant team itself represents an internal mechanism for organizational adaptation to internal and external demands and changes, following Buckley's concept of "morphogenesis" and Gardner's (1963) concept of "self-renewal." In response to, and in anticipation of organizational tensions, an effort is made to sense changing conditions, to compare what is observed with what is supposed to be, and to initiate new processes and procedures for reducing the discrepancy between ideal and real states. Schmuck, Blondino, and Runkel (1970) write: "...a school district characterized by self-renewal uses formal procedures for group problem solving, assesses its own progress toward goals, and searches out innovative practices as needed." The internal consultant team attempts to facilitate these efforts for subsystems within the district, and between district subsystems and community sectors.

Several guidelines have been listed for communication consultants to follow when operating as internal change agents. Schmuck, Blondino and Runkel write: consultants..."can produce a lively ability for self-renewal by following these guides:

(1) by diagnosing the discrepancies that exist between the district's goals and its actual organizational performance,

(2) by assessing the levels of role clarity in the district,

(3) by checking on the flow of communication in the district,

(4) by assessing the extent to which the district has a repertoire of interpersonal techniques that aid collaboration in small task-groups,

(5) by assessing to what extent a variety of human resources are available for solving problems in the district,

(6) by assesing the means by which the district selects some innovative activities to be maintained and others to be rejected, and

(7) by assessing the methods the district uses for institutionalizing innovations after they have been judged suitable and worth keeping."

Training for the consultants attempted to teach the theoretical and conceptual content of these guidelines, as well as the processes and techniques involved in their implementation.

The Training Program

During the academic year 1968-1969, plans were made for the selection and training of the consultants. Twenty-three personnel representing many role-types in the district were chosen to participate in the program. A variety of role-types received representation to increase credibility and gain support for the team from all district levels, and to increase the team's awareness of district problems at all levels. Included in the program were assistant superintendents and other central office personnel, teachers, counselors, and principals.

The training program began in June, 1969 with a two-week laboratory. The experience was designed to provide the opportunity for participants to practice diagnosing and intervening into team organizational processes, trying-out exercises and techniques that would prove helpful in working with district groups after training. During the first three days of the laboratory the new consultants experienced many exercises and techniques in small groups. Communication skills (paraphrasing, behavior description, description of feelings, and perception-checking) were emphasised as well as exercises exhibiting important group processes, such as control and influence, use of group resources, cooperation vs. competition, decision-making, conflict, and feedback. Each exercise was debriefed according to how individual behavior affected the group, how observed group

processes affected the consultant team, and how the exercise might be used after training. The new consultants practiced leading exercises to gain the experience and confidence necessary to use them in their own training activities later. The exercises introduced by the CASEA trainers were designed to help the consultant team in their own development as a cohesive organizational unit, as well as to teach concepts, exercises, and techniques that could be used later by the new change agents.

During the next two days the trainees were given the responsibility to assess the progress of the entire team as a unit, and to design some exercises that would facilitate the development of the team itself. Exercises were carried out in small groups and critically evaluated. Learnings from previous days were re-emphasized and were utilized by participants to diagnose group progress toward training goals, identify relevant group processes affecting interaction, and to generalize factors affecting progress to other district groups where similar processes might operate.

During the second week of training, participants divided into six relatively permanent sub-teams of three or more members that operated as an intervention unit. Each sub-team chose an actual district target group from a list of such groups identified by the entire team. The groups selected for intervention were an elementary school staff changing its structure from traditional to unitized, a junior high school staff needing help integrating new staff members, the principal and department heads of a senior high school seeking ways to improve goal-attainment, a group of elementary principals and counselors attempting to work together as an organizational group, and a citizens advisory group trying to make effective inputs into the school.

The second week of training involved the consultants in making contacts with each selected target group, interviewing to gather data, analyzing the data, making diagnoses, setting intervention goals, and actually designing an intervention.

CASEA trainers acted as facilitators and advisors for the sub-teams, imputing problem-solving skills as an aid to working effectiveness. A permanent relationship was established between a CASEA trainer and each intervention sub-team. Also, an effort was made to continue to build the entire consultant team as a unit lending mutual support and help to each sub-team.

After the major two-week laboratory, training continued as CASEA consultants attended the interventions carried out by their protegés, and provided feedback on performance in the form of constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement. At least ten interventions designed to increase communication and problem-solving effectiveness were carried out by the communication consultants with the assistance of CASEA consultants during the next several months. In March of 1970, CASEA withdrew, leaving the consultant team to continue OD efforts in the Kent district.

Training Program Evaluation

Evaluation of the training program proceeded in two directions. One approach measured the impact of interventions made by the consultant team as a whole. This data has not been completely analyzed, however a report by Schmuck, Blondino and Runkel of occurences in the district following the initiation of the new team reveals that the team did receive acceptance in the district as an intervention unit, and that the team was able to facilitate communication, collaborative problem-solving, and organizational adaptiveness in the district. As of now, the consultant team has more requests from district groups than it can handle, and has changed its orientation from taking the responsibility of sensing district problems to one of allowing groups to come to them for help.

A second evaluative approach measured the effect of the training laboratory on its participants. I have worked most closely with this phase of the study and would like to describe it in some detail.

Design. The design and content of the evaluation was developed following an earlier study of laboratory training, "Changes During and Following Laboratory Training: A Clinical-Experimental Study," (Miles, 1965). Miles attempted to identify personal, personality, and organizational characteristics of participants that influenced laboratory interaction, laboratory learning, and performance after training. Miles identified a "cumulative-sequential" theory of laboratory learning (see Figure I). Here, initial motivation, nature of presentation of self in the laboratory, amount of participation and involvement, and feedback reception were said to relate to each other in a sequential chain, each segment of the chain relating to the one next to it most closely. The outcome of progression through the chain by a participant was said to equal laboratory learning. Miles used these laboratory participation variables, along with personal, personality, and organizational factors as predictors of learning in the laboratory and application of learnings after training.

Miles' study employed a variety of measures for the predictor and criterion variables, including self, trainer, and peer-ratings, personality and attitude tests, and self-report questionnaires. A complete experimental design was used producing much information about the effects of laboratory training. Generally, results indicated that personality variables did not relate to post-training performance directly, but did influence laboratory participation which related to performance; also, organizational factors mediated between the amount learned in the laboratory and application of learning after training; further, the nature of laboratory interaction was the best predictor of laboratory learning.

Miles' results begin to reveal a complex pattern of interaction among personal and organizational factors, laboratory participation and learning, and training outcome. The present study sought to further clarify these relationships, as well as to provide information about how these factors affect the performance of our consultants so that we might have a better idea of whom to select for the role in subsequent training programs.

A Representation of the "Cumulative--Sequential Theory of Laboratory Learning" (After Miles, 1965)

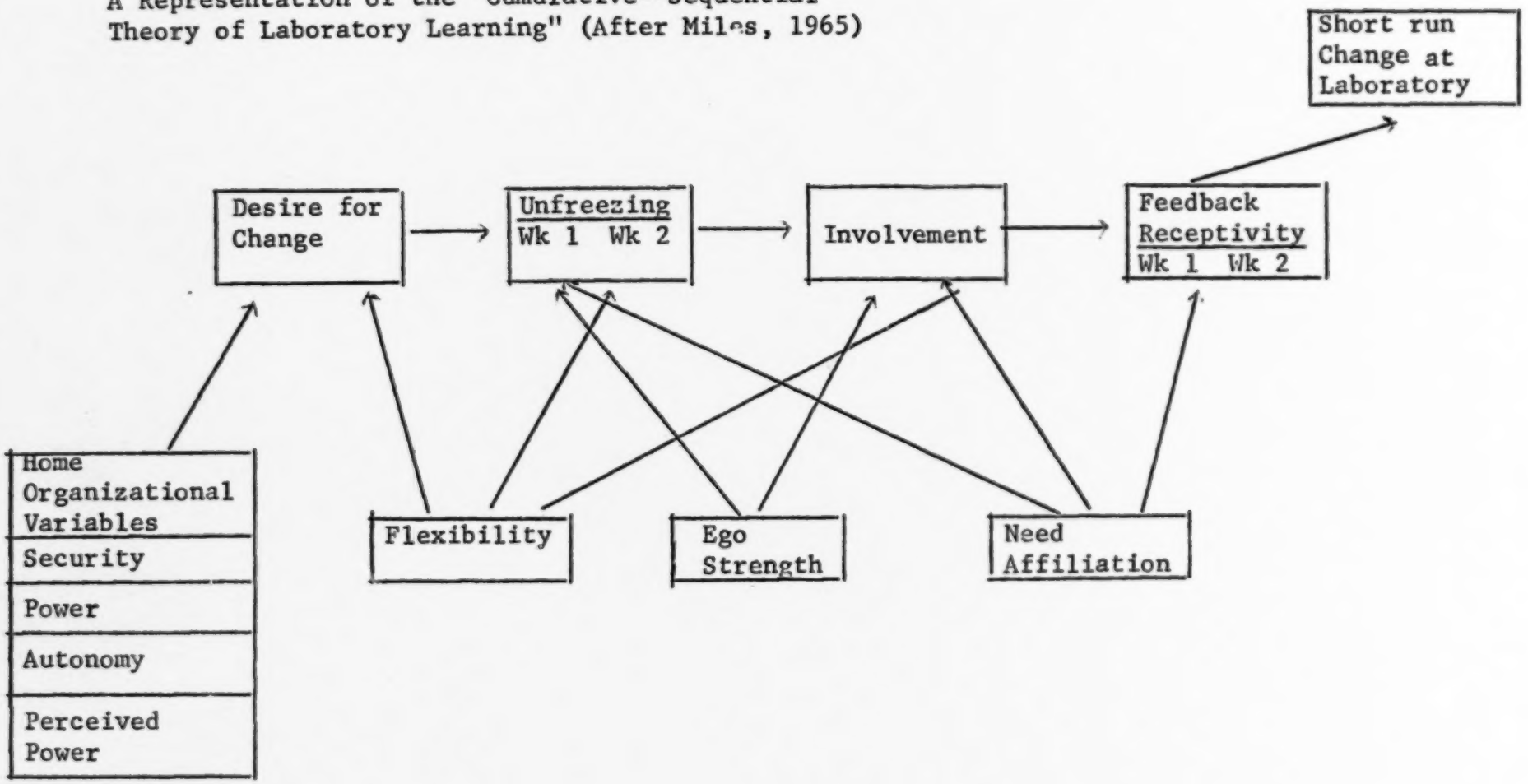

Figure I*

"Predicted Relationships Among Organizational, Personality, Treatment Participation Variables, and Short Run Change."

*In the actual study, relationships between these as well as other variables were obtained. They are not reported here.

The present study endeavored to follow both the content and instrumentation of the Miles study as closely as possible. The study was modified according to differences in population and type of laboratory. Basically, the study is correlational in nature, seeking relationships among predictor and criterion variables.

Data Collection. Data was collected before, during, and after the training laboratory. Table I provides a list of variables and instruments included in the study.

Results

Three main facets of the results have been analyzed for this presentation in an effort to further clarify the effects of laboratory training, and to identify characteristics of successful trainees. The three are: 1) the influence of participant characteristics (personality and prior personal) on laboratory participation, learning during training, and effectiveness in the consultant role; 2) the relationships between laboratory participation, learning during training, and external criterion measures; and 3) the effect of organizational factors on laboratory participation, learning during training and effectiveness in the consultant role. Results of this study will be compared with those obtained by Miles where appropriate.

Generally, the results show that the laboratory had a significant impact on its participants. Significant gains during training were found for five types of skills important for the ability to act in the consultant role: communication skills ($p<.01$), interpersonal effectiveness ($p<.05$), sensitivity toward interpersonal phenomenen ($p<.01$), diagnostic ability ($p<.05$), and action skill ($p<.05$).* Also, observer reports indicated high participant involvement in the laboratory design. Further, although not a part of this study, initial reports

*Differences between trainer ratings early and late in the laboratory; (t-test--one-tailed).

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TABLE I

Variables and Instruments Included in the Study

Personality Variables

Ego Strength (revised Barron scale, after Miles)
Flexibility (revised Barron scale, after Miles)
Need Affiliation (French's Test of Insight)
Need Achievement (French's Test of Insight)

Organizational Factors

Power (role in district)
Mobility (participant's report of how long he intended to stay in his present position)
Security (years in present position)
Perceived Power I (participant's report of his perceived power to change the district as a person)
Perceived Power II (participant's report of his perceived power to change the district in role as communication consultant)

Prior Personal Factors

Age
Sex
Number of hours of previous group experience

Laboratory Participation Factors

Desire to be a Consultant (participant's self-report)
Reduction of Defensiveness (unfreezing) (post-session trainer rating collected five times during laboratory; Likert scale)
Involvement (same as above)
Feedback Receptivity (same as above)

Internal Performance Criterion

Laboratory Learning (trainer-observer rating of participant's learning at the end of the first and second week of training; ranking scale)
Potential Effectiveness (exhibited skill) (same as above)

External Performance Criterion

Peer rating of performance in field (peer ranking form administered nine months after laboratory)
Number of hours spent in post laboratory training activities (participant's self-report)
Target Group Ratings (post-intervention ratings completed by participants of district groups that consultant subteams worked with)

from the district, as reported earlier, indicate that consultant team members have been able to intervene effectively into district organizational processes. Other sorts of evidence for the impact of the laboratory will be considered in the following sections chosen for analysis.

1) The influence of participant characteristics. Table II shows the influence of participant characteristics on laboratory interaction, learning and exhibited skill at the laboratory, and training outcome on three measures. As in the Miles study, results show that personality factors do not relate to training outcome directly, but do influence the nature of participation in the laboratory. As seen in Table II, need affiliation, flexibility, need achievement, and ego strength all relate significantly, or near significantly, to at least one of the participation factors. Flexibility contributes to the ability to receive feedback (r=.35) and unfreezing (r=.38), and need achievement contributes to the initial motivation to take the consultant role (r=.52) and involvement (r=.38). It is apparent from this information that personality factors do influence the quality of interaction in the laboratory. As found in the Miles study, quality of interaction during training in turn effects the amount learned from the laboratory. In contrast to the Miles study, learning at the laboratory is also affected somewhat by personality factors: need affiliation and ego strength correlate .54 and .44 respectively with amount learned.

Table II also reveals that age, sex, and amount of previous group experience influence laboratory participation. Younger Ss and males become more involved in the training procedures. A most remarkable finding is that those Ss with previous group experience scored high on the participation factors, and did well in the field after training, but showed little learning and exhibited little skill during training. Previous experience in groups would contribute to a comfortable feeling in the relatively unstructured laboratory situation which would lead to the observed high ratings for non-defensiveness, high involvement,

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TABLE II

Obtained Relationships Among Personality and Personal Variables, Laboratory Participation Factors and Performance on Criterion Measures[1]

	Participation Factors				Internal Criterion		External Criterion		
Personality and Prior Personal Factors	Motivation to take the consultant role	Unfreezing -- non-defensiveness	Participation - Involvement	Feedback Receptivity	Ratings of Learning at Laboratory	Ratings of Exhibited Skill at Laboratory	Target Group Ratings	Number of Hours Spent in Training Activities	Peer Group Rating of Effectiveness
Need Affiliation	-.13	.07	.31	.27	.54**	.05	.03	.17	.06
Flexibility	.30	.37*	.25	.35*	-.10	-.05	.23	.09	.05
Need Achievement	.52**	.13	.38*	.08	.28	-.22	.23	.21	-.19
Ego Strength	-.27	.03	.14	.12	.44*	-.19	-.39*	.21	-.08
Age	-.43*	-.50**	-.46*	-.53**	-.35*	-.36*	-.01	-.10	-.12
Sex	.09	.39*	.29	.19	-.14	-.22	-.48**	.12	.23
Previous Group Experience	.27	.34	.52*	.44*	-.01	-.12	.35	.47*	.65***

1 Figures shown are obtained zero-order r's. N's for the correlations range between 17 and 23.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$
two-tailed tests

and ability to receive feedback; however, if a participant's experience had been in groups not of an organizational nature, such as personal growth groups, some interference would be expected between previous experience and the expectations of the laboratory. This seemed to be the case in this situation.

2) The relationships among participation predictor variables, and internal and external criterion measures. Table III lists the relationships among laboratory participation predictor variables, laboratory learning and exhibited skill, and training outcome. Results generally support the cumulative-sequential learning theory proposed by Miles: the participation factors as a group, with the exception of initial motivation, relate higher than any other factor considered (organizational, personality, prior personal) to gains during treatment. Miles also noted this result in his study.

No clear evidence was found for a sequential relationship among the participation variables, however. The correlations obtained do not show interdependancy as predicted: initial motivation correlates .32 with non-defensiveness, which correlates .45 with involvement, wihch correlates .42 with feedback receptivity, which correlates .45 with gains during treatment, or laboratory learning. A learning sequence is approximated by these relationships however, as these variables correlate more closely than other variables do to them.

The correlation of .08 between initial motivation and gain during treatment seems to detract from the sequential arrangement; however, it appears that this variable indirectly effects learning, as it relates .32 with non-defensiveness, the second vairable in the sequential chain which does relate significantly to treatment gain. This finding provides support for the sequential arrangement that Miles was not able to provide. He found a significant negative relationship between initial motivation and amount learned (r=-.32). Motivation also relates to application of learnings after training, the only participation factor that does so; it relates significantly to the number of hours a participant

TABLE III

Obtained Relationships Among Participation Factors, and Internal and External Criterion Measures.[1]

Participation Factors / Internal-External Criterion Measures	Internal Criterion Measures: Ratings of Laboratory Learning (First Week)	Internal Criterion Measures: Ratings of potential Effectiveness (exhibited skill)	External Criterion Measures: Target Group Ratings (average of three forms)	External Criterion Measures: Number of Hours Spent in Training Activities	External Criterion Measures: Peer Group Ratings of Effectiveness
Motivation to Take Consultant Role	.08	.39*	.29	.42*	.45*
Unfreezing-reduction of Defensiveness	.44*	.45*	.22	.06	.27
Involvement	.47*	.53**	.20	-.19	.30
Feedback Receptivity	.44*	.65***	-.06	-.09	.30
Ratings of Laboratory Learning	-	.42*	.04	.23	.03
Ratings of Exhibited Skill	.42*	-	.13	-.11	.40*
Target Group Ratings	.04	.13	-	.03	.36*
Number of Hours Spent Training	.23	.11	.03	-	.38*
Peer Ratings of Effectiveness	.03	.40*	.36*	.38*	-

1 Figures shown are obtained zero-order r's. N's range from 17 to 23.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$
two-tailed tests

spends in consulting activities (r=.42) and peer ratings of effectiveness in the field (r=.45).

Further support of an indirect nature is found for the cumulative-sequential learning theory when the participation factors are related to ratings of exhibited skill during training. These ratings are based on a participant's sensitivity to interpersonal issues, his diagnostic ability, and the ability to make effective interventions into the interaction process. This exhibited skill relates .39 with initial motivation, .45 with non-defensiveness, .53 with involvement, and .65 with feedback receptivity, showing clearly the sequential effect. This rated skill in turn correlates significantly with laboratory learning (r=.42).

One of the most striking findings is that, contrary to prediction, neither learning or exhibited skill at the laboratory contribute to post-training performance in the consultant role. Table III shows no relationship between laboratory learning and any of the external criterion measures. Potential effectiveness as a consultant, the ratings of exhibited skill at the laboratory, relates significantly only to peer ratings of effectiveness as a trainer in the field (r=.40). Those trainees rated as most effective at the laboratory spent fewer hours in actual training activities, and did not receive as favorable ratings as others from the district target groups they worked with. For this case, there appears to be a problem of transfer from the learning situation to the actual duties of the role. Apparently, it takes more than knowledge of concepts, exercises and techniques, and the ability to apply them in the laboratory to perform adequately in the field. It appears that organizational factors, reported in the next section, hold consequences for effective implementations of the role. The implication is that being an effective group member in a laboratory setting does not guarantee that a person will be an effective group trainer. This is important to note because so many group trainers in all sorts of settings receive little or no formal training aside from being a group participant themselves.

It can be argued that the kind of groups run by our consultants are different from other types, due to their organizational nature, and that unusual skills are necessary to do well in this kind of situation; this may indeed be the case, further research is urgently needed in this area.

3) The Influence of Organizational Factors. Table IV shows the relationships obtained among organizational, treatment process, and internal and external criterion measures. Miles predicted that organizational factors would influence a participant's initial motivation for entering training, and that these factors would mediate between learning at the laboratory and application of learning after training. He found evidence only for the mediation effect: security and power intervening between laboratory learning and learning application. For the present study, similar results were found. First, no significant relationships occurred between any organizational variable and the initial motivation to enter training. As noted in Table IV, however, organizational variables did influence other laboratory participation factors. Power (role in district) bore a negative relationship to unfreezing (r=-.52), participation and involvement (r=-.12), and feedback receptivity (r=-.23). Although all of these relationships are not significant they do indicate that those trainees high in the district power structure found it more difficult to interact in the training situation. Secondly, mobility related negatively with participation and involvement (r=-.32). The lack of involvement on the part of this group shows up in amount of treatment gain (r=-.40), further revealing the relationship between involvement and laboratory learning.

Other organizational factors relate positively to laboratory participation and treatment gains, but not significantly so; these variables are security and the two perceived power measures.

Some of the most significant findings appear when the relationships between organizational factors and post-training performance are noted. First, as

TABLE IV

Obtained Relationships Among Organizational Factors, Laboratory Participation Factors, and Internal and External Criterion Measures.[1]

	Participation Factors				Internal Criterion		External Criterion		
Organizational Factors	Motivation to take the Consultant role	Unfreezing (non-defensiveness)	Participation - Involvement	Feedback Receptivity	Ratings of Learning at Laboratory	Ratings of Exhibited skill at Laboratory	Target Group Ratings	Number of hours spent in training activities	Peer Group Ratings of Effectiveness
Power (role in District)	-.10	-.52**	-.12	-.23	-.04	.02	-.21	-.11	-.08
Mobility (plans for Advancement)	-.09	-.06	-.32	.12	-.40*	-.08	-.32	-.20	-.18
Security (years in present position)	.05	.26	.14	.26	.03	.07	.53**	.12	.32
Perceived Power (self in district)	.22	.38*	.06	.33	.10	-.01	.39*	.11	.43*
Perceived Power (in role as consultant)	.10	.09	.30	.14	.34	-.04	.40*	.17	.34

1 Figures shown are obtained zero-order r's. N's for the correlations range between 17 and 23.

* $p < .05$ two-tailed tests

** $p < .10$

Table IV shows, power and mobility correlate negatively to all three criterion measures. Although most of the correlations reported are not significant, they do provide an indication of the influence of these variables. Power seems to run at cross-purposes with post-training effectiveness, although this relationship could not be predicted directly from ratings of effectiveness during training. It appears that this organizational factor mediates between laboratory performance and post-training effectiveness: those high in the district power structure seemed to threaten the organizational groups they worked with, due not to a skill deficit apparently, but to an organizational role that hindered effective intervention.

On the positive side, security, as in the Miles study, appears to have much to do with training outcomes. This variable correlates .53 with target group ratings of effectiveness as a consultant and .32 with consultant peer ratings of effectiveness nine months after training. Of the external criterion measures, the target group ratings comprise the strongest test of a consultant's ability, and are thus very important in our results. Other organizational variables of importance are perceived power (as a person) and perceived power (in consultant role) to evoke change in district groups. These variables correlate .39 and .40 with target group ratings of effectiveness, and .40 and .34 with consultant peer group ratings of effectiveness, respectively. In the Miles study, similar variables (perceived power as a person and perceived adequacy of organization) were found not to effect post-training performance. Differences in the context of learning application may account for this difference in result.

For the consultant, job security plus the belief that he could personally do something to evoke change in the district provides a confidence necessary to intervene effectively into somewhat threatening district organizational groups. Motivation, as mentioned in the last section, also contributes to effectiveness in the role in terms of number of hours spent in training activities. When motivation

is related to perceived power (r=.38) and security, the probability of success in the consultant role is enhanced considerably.

Interestingly enough, the relationships among these variables and success in the consultant role were not predicted by either laboratory learning or exhibited skill in the laboratory, the internal criterion measures. As with power, security and the two perceived power variables are organizational factors that appear to mediate between laboratory performance and ability in the role. From the perspective of the district target group, a consultant with high job security would be more trustworthy; also, a consultant with feelings of potency (perceived power) may be perceived as having a high degree of enthusiasm, which would lead to his acceptance, the acceptance of his ideas, and successful intervention. Of course, if the consultant did not possess sufficient conceptual and training skills, security and perceived power would not be enough for effective intervention. The point is that these organizational variables operate independently of skill level, apparently in a mediating fashion between training performance and the ability to perform adequately in the actual role. These apparent mediation effects help to explain the absence of a relationship between the internal and external criterion variables. Further treatment of the data is planned to further clarify the operation of these organizational constraints.

Summary of results. Results generally concur with those obtained by Miles in his earlier study. The nature of interaction in the training process remains the best predictor of laboratory learning. Generally, the higher the motivation of the learner, the more likely he will present himself freely in the learning situation, become more involved, and be receptive of feedback, moving through a sequential-cyclical learning process.

As found by Miles, personality variables influence the degree to which a participant is able to interact in the training process. For this study, more

flexible Ss and need achievers found it easiest to interact in the laboratory, perhaps due to the somewhat competitive climate produced by role differences. Also, personality variables, for the most part, did not effect training outcomes directly.

A most interesting result was that, contrary to prediction, laboratory performance did not relate to ability in the role after training. As noted however, organizational factors appear to mediate between laboratory performance and training outcome. Security, power, mobility, and perceived power influence the degree to which a participant is able to apply his learnings and skills in actual organizational intervention. Some of the organizational factors also influenced the nature of participation in the laboratory, probably due to the role differences mentioned previously.

Success in the consultant role appears to be the result of a combination of factors that operate in a complex pattern. If a trainee has previous group experience, a high motivation to take the consultant role, has participated at least minimumly in the training program, has low power in the district and low mobility aspiration, and high job security and perceived power, the chances are that he would operate most effectively as a consultant in his district. It seems apparent, however, that the most effective consultants would not possess all of these characteristics at once; subsequent data analysis will attempt to clarify further the relationships among these variable characteristics.

What We Have Learned From the Training Program and Its Evaluation

Two sorts of statements can be made on the basis of the results obtained. One has to do with the effects of laboratory training generally, and the other with what the results imply about training communication consultants.

The effects of Laboratory Training. The results of this study further clarify the relationships among participant characteristics, involvement in

laboratory training, laboratory learning, and application of learning after training in a setting away from the laboratory, as variables important for determining the effects of laboratory training. It can be argued that, although there were basic differences between the laboratory evaluated here and the laboratory studied by Miles, the variables identified as important for learning and transfer of learning are sufficiently comparable. When a learner in either laboratory entered the training situation he brought with him certain personality, prior personal, and organizational characteristics that made him interact in a predictable way. Also, the amount he learned had to do with the way he interacted, as the learner moved through a cyclical sequence of initial interest, presentation of self, involvement in the flow of interaction, and reception of feedback about performance. High involvement in any situation will most likely provide exposure to the things to be learned and high committment to learning goals. The laboratory design in both studies, and laboratory training in general, produces an atmosphere for optimal involvement and meaningful learning. Lastly, after leaving the laboratory, the participant in either case would face a variety of organizational constraints conditioning his ability to apply the skills learned.

It can also be argued that the results of the two studies provide sufficient convergence so that generalization can be made to other laboratory and non-laboratory settings about the effects of participants on a learning situation and the effects of the learning situation on participants. Whatever the situation, the characteristics identified as important should be taken into account when designing any kind of learning experience.

The training of consultants. As for the training program itself, a great deal was learned about participant characteristics that can be used in planning future consultant training programs. For one thing, it seems appropriate for consultants to divide task functions so that those lower in the district power

structure carry out most of the actual interventions; while, those higher in power lend support to the program, help in identifying district subsystems in need of intervention, and aid in designing interventions.

Further, in selecting participants for such a change program, we would want to make sure that the majority of the trainees had high job security, high perceived power, and much motivation to enter the training program. These characteristics would lend energy to the consultant team and increase the chances of acceptance of the interveners in district groups.

The finding that previous group experience contributed to working effectively in the consultant role, even with little gain in the laboratory, indicates that extensive laboratory training may not be necessary for this group. Perhaps these people could be trained using a programed instructional manual along with co-training practice at a much reduced cost.

Finally, the transfer problem observed could be solved to some degree by designing a training experience so that an actual intervention could be carried out by the participants, perhaps in a co-training role with a more experienced trainer, early in the training program. This experience could occur in between two laboratory sessions. Such a design would give an aspiring consultant more of an idea of what he was in for, what his strengths and weaknesses were, and what he needed to know in terms of concepts, diagnostic skills, and exercises and techniques in order to intervene successfully. This sort of design moves the situation of learning closer to the situation of learning application, and helps to avoid the transfer problem.

Communication consultants in a school district can potentially work toward organizational effectiveness and adaptibility. Change occurs through the actions of those district subsystems, and the people in them, that are to be affected by the change. Taking responsibility for goal and procedure setting by school staffs

and other groups produces committment to the organization, more effective goal attainment, and personal satisfaction for those involved. Communication consultants can facilitate these activities, and therefore, appear as a most promising new administrative structure.

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